

Palmyra Atoll NWR Rainforest Realignment Volunteer Positions

Palmyra Atoll is located in the central Pacific Ocean, about 1,000 miles south of Hawaii. Palmyra is a thickly vegetated set of islands with abundant rainfall; hot, humid temperatures; and rustic living conditions. It is uninhabited except for a small crew who manage The Nature Conservancy field station, Service personnel who manage the refuge resources, and users of the station. Appointees will have the rare opportunity to live in this remote setting surrounded by rainforest, seabirds, land crabs and thriving coral reefs. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is accepting applications for 4 (four) Rainforest Realignment volunteer positions supporting Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge June to mid-October 2024.



Volunteers will spend roughly 2 weeks in Honolulu in preparation before deploying to Palmyra for 4 (four) months. Volunteers will be participating in an exciting long-term project to realign Palmyra's rainforest from a copra plantation (coconut palms) to native forest. This island-level experiment aims to increase native tree species and seabird populations and improve island and coral reef resiliency to climate change.

Duties and Responsibilities: Volunteers will work 8-hours a day 6-days a week for the entire ~4 months on Palmyra without any chance of leaving the atoll. Volunteers will spend most of their time (~32 hours a week) on tasks related to the coconut palm control project. Volunteers will be controlling coconut palms using manual techniques (hacking with machetes) and herbicide applications. The work is extremely strenuous and repetitive, requiring crewmembers to be in excellent physical condition to cope with long hours of stooping, swinging, and hauling in hot and humid conditions. Volunteers will participate in data management and report writing, as well as the cleaning, maintenance, and repair work needed to keep the project going in a remote tropical environment. The volunteers are part of the atoll community and are expected to contribute to basic field station chores such as laundry, cleaning, trash collection, rust abatement, etc. Volunteers will spend approximately 8 hours a week on other biological conservation tasks as needed, for example: invasive plant removal experiments, plant surveys and monitoring, native tree propagation and planting, seabird surveys, marine debris surveys, and starfish surveillance snorkels. Volunteers must be able to swim, snorkel and work from a boat. Many workdays will involve motorboat or kayak operations. Refuge personnel work closely with The Nature Conservancy and volunteers will be interacting with a variety of people from heavy equipment mechanics to philanthropists to scientists. Volunteers are expected to represent the US. Fish and Wildlife Service always in a mature and professional manner, which may include providing interpretive tours and presentations to visitors.

Applications open: Jan 25th – Feb 19th

Job position: June to mid-October 2024

Contact: Rustin Gooden at rustin_gooden@fws.gov

